

The Two-Step Conflict Resolution Approach — Delegate to Make It Easier and Faster to Determine the “Right” Decisions

Managers are given the wrong tools to deal with conflict resolution – and it shows



Harvard Business Review in 2013 reported a survey finding that CEOs considered conflict management skills to be critical to their job. The survey found that 70.8% of CEOs state that they are either working on these skills or want to work more on these skills. Not-with-standing CEOs, skill development in conflict resolution is needed throughout an organization, for all levels involved with the leadership of people.

For years, we did extensive surveys in this area. How would you respond to the question, “Are larger or smaller groups more likely to be better at solving difficult problems with consensus?” Employees, managers included, answered by stating that smaller groups were more likely. The reasons given were that there would likely be fewer disagreements and smaller groups are handled more effectively. But these are false perceptions, caused by the tools managers have been given.

In reality, large diverse groups, having varied backgrounds are better able to look at all angles of a difficult problem in a fraction of the time, and have dramatically better success finding solutions.

If structured properly, “Bigger is better” to quickly determine the “right” decisions

In the past three decades, we studied how various size groups and backgrounds affect issue resolution when conflict was present. We created a variety of situations to observe conflict. Consider an example; bring 10 to 30 people into a large conference room. Ask each person to guess the length of the conference table within an inch. How many answers do you think you would receive? Next, provide the same group with a standard ruler and ask again.

Do you think everyone immediately came into consensus without your needing to intervene? Using an objective measuring “stick” or metric makes it easier and faster to gain consensus for any size group. Ever solve a crossword puzzle?

Consider this example; bring 10 to 30 people with different work backgrounds in a room where a generic crossword puzzle is being projected on the wall. Take another group of five or less, with similar work experience, in another room showing the same crossword puzzle. Which group will be the quickest in solving the crossword puzzle? If you picked the first bigger group, you would be right.

What is the common design structure that supported group consensus between this and the previous example? The design structure presented, common to both examples, allowed for self-guided consensus. This type of design is key to effectively using conflict to determine the “right” decisions.

Let a two-step approach allow you to delegate – that’s working smarter



Delegation Approach Makes It Easier and Faster to Determine the “Right” Decisions

Most managers believe that effective conflict resolution is dependent on developing refined people skills. Although a plus, if you want a simple and effective conflict resolution approach, follow two steps:

- (1) design a consensus structure to present the issues that are causing the conflict, and
- (2) use objective metrics that allow the group to guide themselves into consensus.

This two-step approach allows any size group to resolve conflicts. It also allows you to delegate while still being in control over choosing the “right” decisions. The design of metrics to guide a team into

consensus needs to be based on a final workforce alignment to business expectations measurement. Whatever issue or problem, alignment of the workforce to be successful in following the solution is the ultimate condition for the “right” decision.

We’ve refined and proven our two-step approach over the last 3 decades, to include consensus structures and design of alignment algorithm to incorporate objective metrics. It has been used by groups of 5 to 55 with consistent success.

With our two-step approach, managers delegate conflict resolution, making it is easier and faster to determine the “right” decisions.



Call to learn more about our two-step approach, using alignment algorithm and measurements, to delegate conflict resolution – making it easier and faster to determine the “right” decisions.



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call (310) 476-6899.**